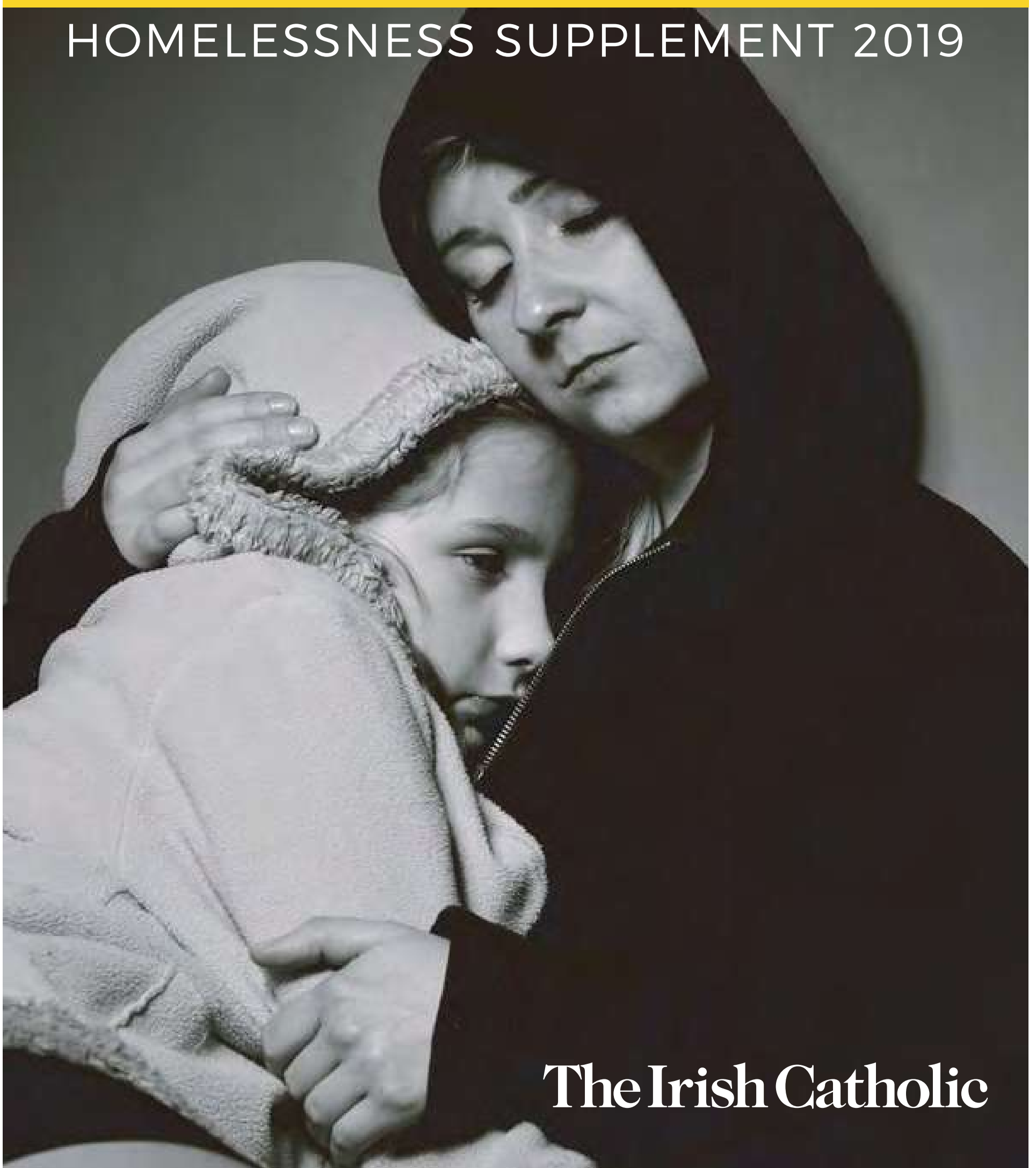


Compassion in a Crisis

HOMELESSNESS SUPPLEMENT 2019

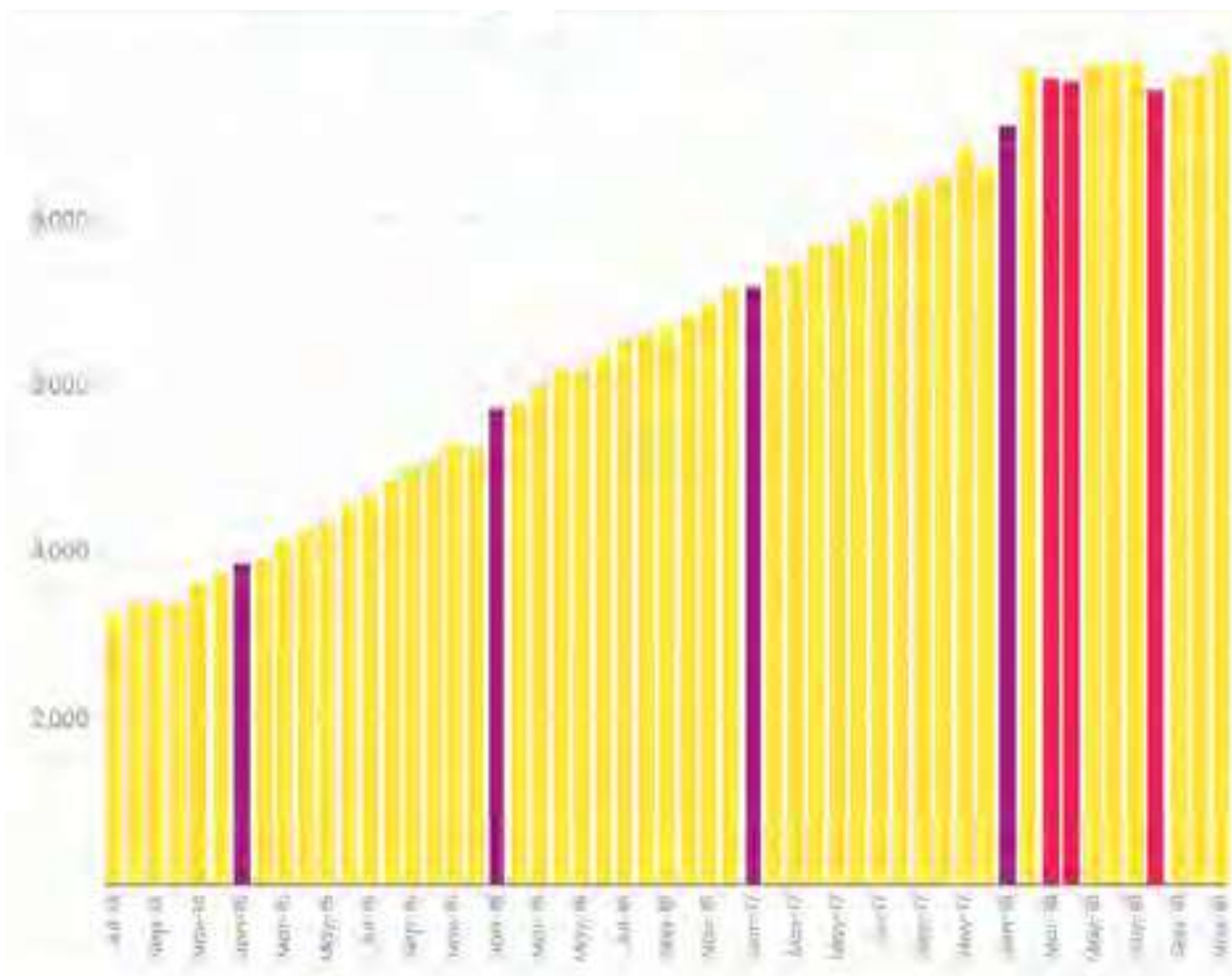


The Irish Catholic

Still Focusing on Ireland's



Total number of people homeless in Ireland



In March, April and August 2018, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government decided to change the definition of homelessness used to compile these statistics, and remove a number of families which had previously been counted as homeless. As a result, the months highlighted in red are not comparable with months that preceded them.

While progress is being made on the homelessness crisis, much more needs to be done, **Greg Daly** reports

Just over four years ago, Ireland seemed to reach a watershed moment in its attitude to homelessness, as the death of Jonathan Corrie just metres away from Leinster House shocked the nation. Despite this, the country's homelessness crisis seems to be getting worse and worse.

Mike Allen, Advocacy Manager for Focus Ireland, says the situation is somewhat more complicated than that.

"It depends on how you want to measure it or look at it," he tells *The Irish Catholic*. "In terms of the number of people who are experiencing homelessness and how long they're experiencing it for, it is much worse now than it was four years ago.

"The statistics are on the Focus Ireland website and they're very, very clear," he continues. "They've doubled and doubled again with the numbers of individuals and families and children who are all experiencing homelessness. So at that level, which is the most human and important level, it is far, far worse than it was before."

Developers

There has, however, been progress in some respects, he points out.

"You've got to counterbalance that with how the solutions to the problem are now much more advanced than they were four years ago. So, four years ago there was virtually nothing being built, but not only that, the various State and private organisations which build housing – local authorities and developers and whatever – were on their knees. They didn't have staff, they didn't have capac-

ity, they didn't have access to money, they were still really decimated from the Crash," he says.

Capacity

"Now there is considerably more capacity, there's more housing getting planning permissions, things are in the pipeline for delivery, so in some sense there's that balance between how the human scale is worse, but the cavalry are closer to coming over the hill, for want of a better metaphor."

While adamant that a solution is closer now than it was when Jonathan Corrie died, Mr Allen cautions that there should be no false optimism around this, explaining that the numbers of new homes being built is far below what it needs to be if the problem is to be solved.

The problem, in the meantime, is continuing to grow, with homeless figures continuing to rise, even if they have not yet crossed the symbolic 10,000 mark.

"They changed the definition of what was to be counted as homeless," he says. "If they had kept the same definition it would probably be up to over 11,000 but they changed

the definition..."

* * * * *

One of the real dangers around the crisis, he acknowledges, is that people simply move beyond shock and horror, beginning to accept it and think of it as normal.

"That happened with the unemployment crisis, that happened with the trolley crisis, and so on: it's the nature of news and media and humanity that people become used to things," he says, adding that this issue may be different.

"I think there's a very high intolerance in Ireland around homelessness. There's a particular attachment to home, and a particular rejection to the idea that thousands of people could be without a home," he says.

"The other factor is that it's not just a homeless crisis – there'd be more risk of people just walking on by if the problem was confined to a particular group of people," he adds.

"The reality is that what we see as a homeless crisis is exactly the same set of

factors which is pushing rents up for ordinary working people, that means that lots of parents have their kids coming back to live in the family home, that people in their family home can't afford to buy their own home, companies can't recruit the staff that they need because of rent and housing in Dublin. All these things are all interwoven, and people recognise that homelessness isn't just a thing over there."

In short, he says, the issue is a broader housing crisis, with homelessness being the tip of the iceberg. "I think there's a wide recognition of

that, and there isn't a sense that it's something that happens to other people. It's affecting us all, and the solutions that will help homelessness will also help the

people who are paying massively excessive rents or can't get suitable accommodation," he says.

The key to addressing this is, quite simply, increasing the housing supply, he stresses, while pointing out that this isn't enough.

"Very little else works without that," he says. "It's necessary but not sufficient."

For tackling long term homelessness, the expansion of the Housing First programme across Ireland to such cities as Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford has made a real difference, he says.

"The traditional approach was you provided somebody with shelter, and then while they were living in that shelter you'd try to help them to deal with whatever problems have caused their homelessness," he says, adding that for long-term homeless people these problems would typically involve mental health or addiction issues.

"The traditional approach was let's get them off the drugs, let's get their mental health sorted

out, and if they do that we can put them in transitional housing, and if they settle in there then we give them temporary housing and if they're very good we'll give them a house," he says, adding that this is known as a 'Staircase' approach.

"The Housing First approach turns that on its head, and says a person with mental health or addiction issues is much more likely to be able to tackle those problems if they have their own home and can close their own front door and have their own privacy," he says.

"So you provide the person with a home, and put very high levels of support around them in the home. With Housing First you have very high levels of mental health and tenancy sustainment supports around the person. There'd be substantial multi-disciplinary teams working in Housing First with mental health professionals, nurses, as well as tenancy sustainment and social workers and so on."

“The key to addressing this problem is increasing the housing supply, he stresses, while pointing out that this isn't enough”

Describing this as probably the most researched social policy intervention ever, with large amounts of data especially from Canada, he says that internationally it has around an 80% success rate. In contrast, he says, traditional staircase approaches tend to run at between 30 and 50%.

"In Dublin the Focus Ireland Housing First part of the programme we've been running for a number of years has been running at a 90% success rate," he says. "It's been working very well – about 200 people in Dublin have been housed through Housing First, and most of those people have been people who were not using shelters, who were very long-term rough sleepers sleeping on the streets, not engaging with homeless services."

While the approach is intensive, cost-benefit studies on it in Canada and elsewhere have found that it's not more expensive than traditional approaches.

"It's extremely expensive to keep people homeless, in the sense of providing people with emergency accommodation, and the mental health and criminal justice issues that arise are very, very expensive," he says. "Some



Mike Allen of Focus Ireland.

deepening housing crisis



lessness, and Mr Allen says that this continues to rise.

"About four years ago, there were about 300 families homeless when the homeless figures first came out, and now there's over 2,000 families homeless, so it's a massive, massive increase," he says.

“One of the things social workers talk about is parents being infantilised”

"Focus Ireland would be the main lead agency responding to that with the Homeless Executive, so practically how this works is that there's a team called the Family Homeless Action Team, that comprises case managers for the family and child support workers," he explains.

"Each case manager would be trying to provide support to about 20 families who are living in hotels or hubs or B&Bs or whatever," he continues. "Their job would be to support that family to exit from homelessness, but also to support them to survive homelessness and deal with

the issues, but all the survival work is directed towards getting the people out of it. We're very much not interested in managing homelessness – we're interested in ending it for the individuals in it," he stresses.

Last year Focus helped over 1,000 families out of homelessness, but with about as many families becoming homeless over the year the figures haven't improved. Meanwhile, Mr Allen says, about 10% of Ireland's homeless families have been homeless for over two years, which takes a toll on the children.

"Typically the kind of problems were having is children reluctant to go to school not able to concentrate on their school work, doing less well at school, and for older children there is a risk of them dropping out of school," he says.

With their families there are behavioural problems and difficulties with discipline, he continues.

"One of the things social workers talk about is parents being infantilised," he says. "The role of the parent is about security and author-

ity and a sense of order for the child, but in actual fact the parents are not able to provide the security and the child might often see the parent being told off by the person who's running the B&B, or there are curfews for the parents or parents can't bring their children into the kitchen.

"The way in which the parents' authority are constantly undermined from every direction during their experience of homelessness, our child development people tell us, not unreasonably, has long-term environmental impacts on the children and the family," he says.

Apology

"The question is whether in 30 years' time the Taoiseach of the day will be standing up and issuing an apology for the way we treated homeless families in this period in the way we've seen for the Mother and Baby homes or industrial schools, and so on," he observes.

In terms of going forward, and stressing that extra beds in emergency shelters are not merely an answer but may be

deepening the general homelessness problem, Mr Allen reiterates the importance of increasing the housing supply.

"While very clear about the progress that's been made in providing more housing, that really needs to be redoubled, because we need to deliver around 35,000 new homes every year to stand still," he says.

"We probably only delivered around 18,000 last year, so we're a long way even from standing still."

Ordinary people have a key role to play in tackling this, it seems.

"That really needs to be accelerated, and that involves things like local communities, local politicians and so on not objecting to every development in the area that's proposed, because there's a real contradiction between the widespread desire for a public solution to the housing problem, and the localised resistance by local communities to every proposal to actually build homes," he says.

"That has to change if we're to deal with this problem," he says.

studies have shown that it is a lot cheaper than traditional approaches, but I think that those are in particular cases. Our view is that it works out

as being about the same cost as traditional approaches, but it works."

Recent years has seen a lot of attention on family home-

“We were so happy to have spent Christmas in a home of our own, at last.”

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Support from Cork Simon can transform lives, Greg Daly learns

Becoming homeless and having to rely on emergency accommodation in his home city seven years ago was a desperate experience for Garry, a native of Cork City.

"Some weeks you might get a bed three nights out of seven so you might have to sleep out rough for the other four nights. It was lonely, it was cold – it was around this time of year. It was probably the loneliest time of my life," he tells *The Irish Catholic*.

Now 31 years old, the onetime window fitter is living in Gateway, a high-support housing unit run by Cork Simon, which operates as a supportive bridging community, intended to prepare long-term homeless people for independent living. It's a far cry from how he lived on the streets.

"When I first became homeless, I went to the homeless persons unit," he says, explaining how once he had a letter confirming him as homeless he turned to Simon.

"I was using the day centre daily," he says. "You put your name down for a bed that morning and then around lunchtime they gave whoever's there dinner, and let you know whether you've got a bed for the night or not. There would be so many people they didn't have enough beds to give everyone so they rotate it, so some nights you're in, some nights you're out."

Biting cold

With the January cold biting, the charity's provision of blankets, sleeping bags, and a chance to get in from the cold and have a hot meal in the evening – even now the daily soup run serves over 12,000 meals a year – was especially welcome.

"Then you could try and find a safe place where you can sleep that night, where you're not being kicked or you're not having abuse thrown at you, smart comments and that," he says, saying the dangers and discomfort of the night could vary, with drunk passers-by being a real challenge.

"It was hard, it was tough, just trying to find a safe place to sleep," he says. "You spend most of your day in survival mode, really, trying to think where am I going to tonight, or how am I going to about it. You're planning it really, most of the day. You've nowhere else to go, because all you're doing is walking round town for the day."

As time went on the city's homeless crisis worsened, and Cork Simon expanded its capacity,

Garry looks down St Patrick's Hill on the streets where he used to beg.



From homelessness to hopefulness

with an emergency night service being added to the community's day centre so an extra 15 people without beds could be given at least a mattress to lie on in the night.

"A lot of the time it's full and not everybody can get in. That's how I started and it took a while before I got a bed in Simon full time," Garry says.

"When you do get a fulltime bed you get assigned a keyworker," he continues. "I was still using heavily at the time – I was on heroin at the time. I'd progressed obviously from smoking weed to cocaine, ecstasy and then heroin. That was kind of the end of the line."

It was difficult to fight addiction in the emergency shelter, Garry adds.

"It's very hard to get clean in the shelter because there's so many people using and whatever is going on behind closed doors that the staff can't see. It was very hard to get clean there, and I was using heavily at the time, and the keyworker was working with me to try and get clean," he says. "I managed it after about 12 months. I was so sick and tired of it, and gave it a break and got in contact with Gateway here. They told me that if I could stabilise myself and get some clean time behind me that they might be able to provide me with a bed, so there was a bit of hope

there then, where I'd had no hope and felt hopeless before that."

The prospect of a way out was key to him getting clean, as it gave him things he knew he could live for. Not least the hope of being able to see his infant daughter.

“It gave me great confidence. It showed me that I can go back and do it, to move away from homelessness and addiction”

"I was suicidal at times," Garry says. "At the start when I was sleeping out, many times I thought it'd be easier...sometimes I'd pray to God that I wouldn't wake up the following morning, but when I got the bit of hope from Gateway I stopped using, stabilised myself, and got a routine. I got a second interview with Gateway here, and they told me there was a bed here for me, so from that point on I got clean and started working on myself and getting my daughter back in my life."

Praising staff at the community for helping him get access to his child, he says: "I'm on a methadone programme now at the moment, on a reducing dose and hopefully I'll be off that as well come the summer. I only got access back with my daughter last week. When

I got here that was one of my main priorities. Obviously, my main priority was to stay clean, because without staying clean none of that was possible. There was plenty of motive there."

At the same time, Garry says, getting clean and staying clean are different things, with the latter being much harder, though Gateway provides him with an environment where he has a fighting chance.

"When I got here it was a lot easier, and a lot more relaxed because everyone in the house was in the same boat as me, trying to stay clean," he says. "This house would be a kind of stabilisation house, focused on helping you in recovery and stuff like that. It's a lot more relaxed – the shelter would be a lot more chaotic, I suppose, whereas Gateway's a stabilisation place: keyworking sessions weekly, and if something needs to be done or the staff notice a certain behaviour they'll pull you up on it and say you need to work on this."

Community

Routine is key to his day, he says, with daily meditation being an important part of his life there, along with meetings, working with his keyworker, courses, and his own room, as well as common areas for recreation, with the members of the community occasionally having

outings to the cinema, go-karting or football matches among other things. As much as anything, it's about warding off boredom.

"Idle hands are the devil's playground, so you're battling addiction and don't want to fall backward into homelessness again. You're working both sides of it, and it's hard," says Garry.

"It's kind of like being in a houseshare at home with support from the flat, which is good. It kind of helps you to move on to independent living as well. It kind of gives you all the tools that you need for when you do go to independent living," he says.

Simon also arranged for Garry to work part-time as a kitchen porter ahead of Christmas to get him used to possibility that he could work again. "It gave me great confidence. It showed me that I can go back and do it, to move away from homelessness and addiction, and go back to normal living," he says, adding, "before I became homeless I always worked as a window fitter, a glazer and I'd like to go back doing that fulltime again."

"I wouldn't have dreamed of that a year and a half ago," he continues. "I would have been suicidal then, sleeping rough. A year can make a big difference – without the help and support of Gateway and Cork Simon it wouldn't have been possible."

“This house would be a kind of stabilisation house, focused on helping you in recovery and stuff like that. It's a lot more relaxed – the shelter would be a lot more chaotic, I suppose, whereas Gateway's a stabilisation place”

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Offering more than shelter in a time of need – Depaul

For people experiencing homelessness, living in uncertainty, with a lack of good nutrition and self-care can all lead to an overall decline in mental and physical health. At Depaul we truly believe people experiencing homelessness should have clear pathways to the health care they require.

Over the last number of years, we have urged Government leaders to take an integrated approach to homelessness and health. To really bring joined up thinking so the most vulnerable in our society get the care they deserve.

“Jess Sears is one of Depaul’s two clinical nurses who work within its services, helping to bring vital health care to those most in need.”

Jess Sears is one of Depaul’s two clinical nurses who work within its services, helping to bring vital health care to those most in need. Jess says, “We support service users by providing direct, one-to-one, nursing support. What that means is basic assessments, wound care and health promotion interventions. As part of my role in Depaul I advocate and support service users to access health services they would otherwise find challenging because of blocks or gaps in service provision. It’s all about liaising and supporting people to access the right types of care.”

In 2017 Depaul provided 1,334 nursing consultations, 1,217 GP consultations and 2,541 health interventions for some of the most unwell people experiencing homelessness. Our services are tailored to meet the health of our service users and we aim to put them first in everything we do.

Jess continues, “I think we all need to be working within an inclusion health model.

So inclusion health looks to include people that are the most marginalised. So people that have complex addiction issues, people from traveller back-grounds, people that have experienced trauma and people with different disabilities. At Depaul we really look to focus on how we can bring the best service to those people.”

What our work within homelessness has taught us is that people in homelessness, suffering with chronic addition issues, age quicker than those who have a secure place to call home. In a recent study carried out by Depaul in its Sundial House service, a service for entrenched rough sleepers with alcohol addiction, we found that those in this service suffer more with chronic illnesses and also have a shorter life-expectancy than people who have a secure place to live.

Jess says, “What we’re seeing is people are a lot sicker in our services than in the general population. We are seeing people that are aging at a much younger age. So somebody that would be living in the community that might be 80 or 85 years old

we’re seeing the same health conditions in our population with people who are in their 50’s. In essence we are caring for a much younger aging population.”

“Jess currently works out of Depaul’s Back Lane Hostel, a 100-year-old hostel for homeless men. Back Lane provides 62 beds for those most in need.”

Jess currently works out of Depaul’s Back Lane Hostel, a 100-year-old hostel for homeless men. Back Lane provides 62 beds for those most in need. Jess believes having a dedicated nurse within services really helps in identifying and meeting the needs of those experiencing homelessness, “Depaul is really good at identifying a person’s needs and the level of support that they’ll require. I think we have such a range of services that we have the ability to meet people where they are at and support them to move to a specific service, based



on the support that they are likely to need.”

Originally from Canada Jess came to Ireland in 2007. Before joining Depaul in 2014 Jess worked with other non-profit organisations within the homeless sector.

Her work centred around caring for rough sleepers and people suffering with drug addiction, “I have been providing nurse-lead, primary care in inner-city Dublin for the last ten years. Specifically, around health promotion interventions. So things like flu clinics, blood virus screening, vaccinations. A lot

of specialist wound care and a lot around women’s health. Things like cervical test smears and also safe injection and needle exchange.”

Depaul believes in the potential of all people and with the right supports

people can move out of homelessness to live independently and really thrive within their community. This includes receiving the right care in terms of health needs and really showing people that they matter and that somebody does care about them.

“What I would say to people is, the people that we work with are lovely and they are a privilege to work with. We are not in a position where people have to disclose everything to us but it is a real privilege when a service

user shares their story with you and it is a privilege when you’ve developed a relationship with somebody where they feel comfortable to do that and where they start to consider themselves as having value.”

At Depaul we aim to empower our service users, to give them a sense of hope. We believe in rights and responsibilities which is why our programmes are based around involving our service users and really enabling them to take the lead and make decisions which they feel comfortable with.

Jess says, “Our goal at Depaul is to empower people so they understand they do have value and they are worth being looked after. And to support them to see that and to learn how to look after themselves better. People often ask ‘did you ever fix somebody?’ and I’d say we are not there to fix people. We are there to support people and to show them that somebody cares about them.”



If you wish to help those most in need and to help to provide the vital health care those experiencing homelessness require you can do so by visiting ie.depaulcharity.org/ and giving what you can. Thank you.



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Empowering vulnerable tenants in a failing system



Chai Brady speaks to Threshold about Ireland's crippling housing crisis

Renting families are not only struggling to afford their homes, but are hesitant to engage with their landlords regarding accommodation issues in fear of real or perceived repercussions, an Irish charity warns.

On the frontline of the housing crisis, Threshold assists with a plethora of queries and defends vulnerable people from homelessness.

With the crisis continuing seemingly and alarmingly in perpetuity, people are becoming increasingly desperate to keep their homes, but this is leading to the standards of tenancy or much-needed repair work not being addressed.

The sooner people engage with Threshold regarding a dispute the better, according to project worker Irene Dunne.

While the charity gives advice and advocates on behalf of individuals struggling with a difficult tenancy, it's important that they're approached at the "initial stages of maybe a difficulty before it escalates" according to Ms Dunne.

This is particularly relevant if an arrears or anti-social behaviour case is brought before the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), as it is then in the hands of an adjudicator whose decisions are legally binding.

Advice

She described a case she was assisting with last week, in which a father of three called in to ask advice about a landlord not extending their lease for another four years, after the family had been living in the house for almost eight years.

"The children are of an age they were born in the house, this is their home, they don't know any other home," says Ms Dunne.

"And obviously their friends the school, it's a huge wrench for people because when they do go into temporary accommodation, it's whatever is available. People



Irene Dunne, a project worker with Threshold.



are traveling from one end of the city to the other side of the city in early morning trying to get children to school so that their lives aren't disrupted, so that they're still around their friends in school.

"Then you have that awful thing of them going back to maybe a hotel room or a B&B, there's no facilities for them to cook.

"People are doing everything they can to remain in their tenancy, they're nervous, and particular people who are more vulnerable, if English isn't their first language as well, and that they can't get their point across, they're fearful of what might happen. They don't know what their rights may be, they may not be au fait of what should be happening and there's that element throughout."

In another one of her cases Ms Dunne spoke of a woman with children who had to vacate her rented house in North Co. Dublin while work was being done to tackle pyrite issues.

"We assisted her to vacate the

property and got her temporary accommodation from the local authority so she moved out with her family," says Ms Dunne.

However it was when she was in the temporary accommodation that the landlord unexpectedly served her with a notice, despite reassurance from the landlord there would be no break in her tenancy.

“The vast majority of landlords are willing to speak at least and to listen to what you have to say”

"I got on to the landlord and explained this is not what he could do, he must reinstate her in the tenancy and then issue a notice. She moved back into the tenancy, she left in June and was back in September and this is still an ongoing case with us – we're still very much involved.

"She could have been out of the

property if she hadn't got in touch with us and we hadn't worked on her behalf with the landlord."

Ms Dunne says that it's "quite unnerving" for many people in the private rental sector, particularly people who have lower incomes.

Although the charity mainly receive calls from people who have low incomes, there are many couples who are both working and on "decent wages" who still find it hard to manage exorbitant rental prices.

They also receive calls from people who aren't in immediate danger of losing their home, but could be looking for advice as to how to approach their landlord regarding a particular issue. Once they give consent in writing to Threshold they can intervene on the tenant's behalf – or even just give advice.

Recently Threshold have expressed concern about the large amounts of data being asked for by letting agencies and landlords – from PPS numbers, pictures of

themselves and links to social media accounts – in order for people to be given preferential treatment at the pre-letting stage of the private rental market.

Practices like this, and others are what Threshold has been vocal about, and continues to advise people about who avail of their services.

Although landlords can often be painted in a bad light, Ms Dunne says there are good and bad landlords just as there's good and bad tenants.

"You would have to say that, the vast majority of landlords are willing to speak at least and to listen to what you have to say, obviously there is pressure on everybody, on some landlords there might be pressure from a financial institution to get a certain amount of money back from a particular property.

"The pressure is on to sell or to get more rent, sometimes they see no alternative than to sell," she added.

Stressful

Helping people fighting to keep their houses can be "stressful" says Ms Dunne, but with good supports in the Threshold office they're able to keep their heads above water.

"People do break down on the phone, they break down in the interview rooms, men and women. Sometimes you have people come in in extremely difficult circumstances, maybe English isn't their first language and they might have one of their children in who is interpreting for them.

"That's very upsetting because the child is hearing something they shouldn't be hearing but the parents have no other option, they need that help. That can be difficult."

Despite the challenges, Threshold are continuing to do all they can to support those fighting a failing housing system and to give advice to those in need.

Leave a Legacy of Hope

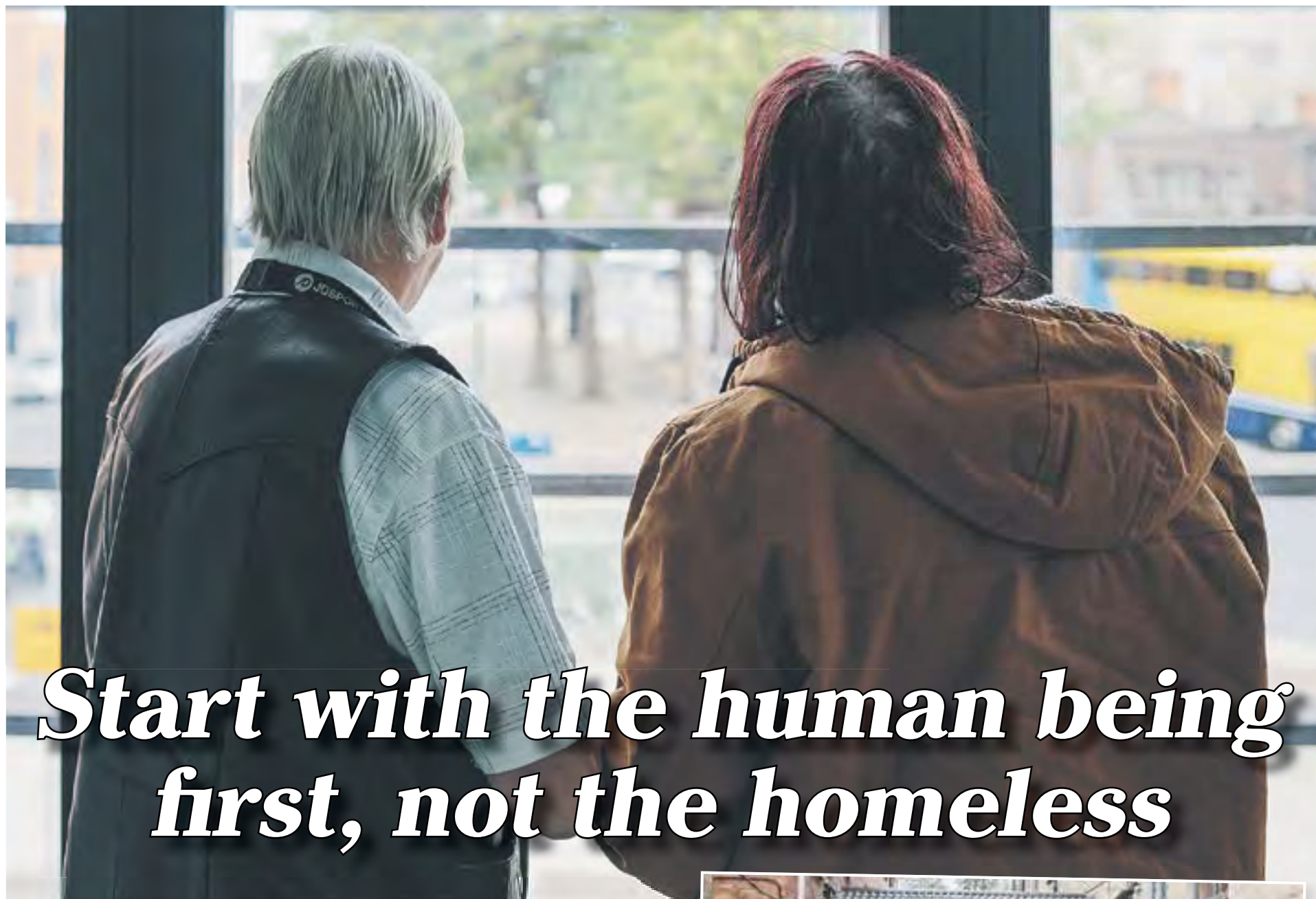
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Start with the human being first, not the homeless



Kerry Anthony
CEO Depaul Ireland

Sr Susan is a Chaplain and has volunteered with Depaul for almost two years. As part of her role she provides spiritual and pastoral support for Service Users and staff through difficult times.

"I would always say, look at the person first. This is a human being like you or me, we have blood in our veins, we get up every morning hoping for the best for our day. We never know what circumstances could interfere or change in our lives that we too could end up homeless. That could be us, you know, and how would we like to be treated?"

On a weekly basis, Sr Susan visits a number of Depaul's services, listening to and providing comfort for those who have found themselves in really difficult circumstances: "I link in with people in the 24-hour, the One Night Only



Sr Susan receiving an award from Depaul's Volunteer Department, pictured with Dermot Murphy, Senior Services Manager with Depaul and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Nial Ring.

services and people who are coming in to homelessness for the first time. Just being able to sit with them and let them cry if needed and to just listen to their story, their fears and to try and give them a little bit of reassurance and support and practically to tell them what staff they need to

link in with in the morning before they leave."

She goes on to explain how from time to time she offers pastoral accompaniment to various places and does hospital visits and how important that can be to someone who is homeless and may have a lack of family support: "I remem-

ber one time visiting a service user in hospital and the person saying to me 'I love when you come in because you make me feel normal in the ward'. You have to understand that that visit may be the only visit the person receives."

On the topic of Chaplaincy and what it means, Sr Susan



Back Lane Hostel, an open door in a time of need.

is not so much worried about if people understand what it means, but more the role a Chaplain can play within these vital homeless services. "It's not so important about what a Chaplain does but it's the presence of a Chaplain that matters and having the time, especially when staff are very busy, to sit down with Service Users and that you're there as a person who can maybe help them tap in to the resource of hope or resilience that is in that person. If it from a source of faith or a belief in God well and good but if not that is okay because you're trying to hold them and keep them until they can get their feet back underneath them to move on from homelessness," she said.

When it comes to misconceptions of homeless people, Sr Susan encourages every-

body to look at people in a compassionate light and most importantly be kind: "Even if you pass somebody that is begging on the street, that is a human being that for some reason has to beg. Even if you don't give them anything, just say hello. Just acknowledge that they exist. Remember, it is a human being with blood in their veins like you and me, and begin there."

Depaul is a homeless charity which was set up in 2002. They provide a range of outreach and accommodation services across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and last year helped almost 4,000 men, women and children. To find out more or to make a donation visit ie.depaulcharity.org

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